

NOTES & NEWS

Note on the Northward Spreading of *Mya arenaria* LINNAEUS in Alaska

BY

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Mya arenaria (LINNAEUS, 1758) is apparently spreading northward along the Pacific shores of North America in a dispersal similar to that which occurred in northern Europe in the 17th Century.

In recent field trips to determine its distribution in nearby waters, the author found it living in sparse to dense concentrations in favorable mud and sand flats along Stephens Passage, the northern reaches of Chatham Strait and the Lynn Canal, all in southeast Alaska. It is expected that further distribution and population studies will reveal that Alaska has acquired a sizeable and heretofore unknown harvestable asset.

At present the earliest evidence of its arrival in these waters comes from a single pair of valves in the collections of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Biological Laboratory at Auke Bay, Alaska. This specimen was collected by J. J. Gonor in Oliver Inlet, Stephens Passage, on April 22, 1963. The specimen was in its 7th year of growth, placing the earliest known date of arrival here as 1956.

The Earthquake Study Team, under the direction of Dr. G Dallas Hanna in 1965 collected *Mya arenaria* shells in Prince William Sound. Specimens of this collection were loaned to the author by the California Academy of Sciences. The oldest of these valves, one collected at Orca Bay, was in its 6th year. Presuming that it was cast on the beach during the convulsions of the earthquake of March 27, 1964, an arrival date of 1958 can be estimated for that area.

It should be noted that the California Academy of Sciences specimens are labelled *Mya japonica* (JAY). Collections of shells of the representative subgenus from widespread areas and now in the author's possession, show ranges of variability tending to invalidate any division into separate species in spite of attempts by others to do so. However, since so much more oyster spat was brought to our West Coast from Japan than from our own eastern shores, it is quite possible that Alaska populations are descendants of either Japanese or American stock, or an admixture of both.

The author hopes to continue investigations into the origin, distribution, and population dynamics of *Mya arenaria* in Alaska and make further taxonomic studies. Valid evidence that it is a relict of past times is also being sought but to date no such evidence has been encountered.

{EDITOR'S Note: A very short time before going to press with the current issue we learned of the sudden death of Mr. Gross. We extend our sincere condolences to his relatives and many friends.}

A. M. U.

Pacific Division

THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING of the American Malacological Union - Pacific Division was held from June 28 to July 1, 1967, at Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, California. The Conchological Club of Southern California acted as host for the meeting.

The Pacific Division Award of Honor was presented to Mr. ALLYN G. SMITH, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco. The presentation was made by Dr. S. S. Berry. There was also a Chairman's Award to ROSE and JOHN Q. BURCH. Dr. Anne Hurst from the University of Reading, England, was the principal speaker at the banquet, which was held this year at the Outrigger on Monterey's well-known Cannery Row.

Officers for the coming year were elected. They are:
Chairman: Mrs. Fay Wolfson (San Diego)
First Vice Chairman: Dr. Bruce Campbell (Lynwood)
Second Vice Chairman: Dr. Dwight W. Taylor, Tempe (Arizona)
Secretary: Mrs. Barbara Good, (San Diego)
Treasurer: Mrs. Helen DuShane (Whittier)
Mentor-Parliamentarian: Dr. Rudolf Stohler (Berkeley)

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